

## **Budget Message from DHHS**

The Department of Human and Health Services(DHHS) has seen tremendous change in 2003 and will continue to transform in 2004. The renewed emphasis on serving Monroe County clients of DHHS, providing a positive work environment for employees, and maintaining the efficiencies that enabled a \$30 million savings for Monroe County taxpayers will continue to be the department's primary focus.

**The Financial Care Path** is responsible for the delivery of Medicaid, Temporary Assistance to Need Families (TANF), Safety Net, Home Energy Assistance Program, Day Care, Food Stamps and Emergency Assistance. As part of Operation Transform, this area was reorganized around process, rather than former separation of divisions by program. Staff was trained on each of the financial programs and work groups were established to address the client's underlying intake area. This has reduced the cycle time for processing for benefits. For those individuals who are determined eligible for assistance, cases are maintained in one of four work groups based on barrier to self-sufficiency: Disabled, Child Only, Substance Abuse and Employable.

During 2004, our focus will be on improving processes to address underlying barriers to self-sufficiency. Projects include, Case Management Services to assist the disabled in securing federal disability assistance, expansion of employment services including placement of Department of Labor and other community services on site at the St. Paul Street Office, regular job fairs, targeted employment services for recovered substance abusers, and case management services for long term TANF recipients. We anticipate that targeting services to address these underlying barriers will improve the cycle time in moving clients to self-sufficiency.

### **2003 Accomplishments**

Implemented front-end employment activities to assist 1,800 Temporary Assistance applicants in securing employment, preventing the need for ongoing assistance.

Consolidated Intake activities for all Financial Assistance programs to streamline access to programs. This has prevented over 5,000 duplicate interviews as eligibility for all programs are now determined by each Intake staff member.

Reorganized undercare activities for all Financial Assistance programs by clients' major barrier to self-sufficiency. Recipients are assisted immediately in addressing barriers such as lack of day care, substance abuse, transportation and more quickly engaged in employment activities. This has resulted in over 2,700 recipients securing employment.

Implemented process changes throughout the Division to reduce cycle times. Reduced cycle times have been achieved for:

- Processing of 97 percent of Medicaid, Temporary Assistance, Food Stamps and Day Care applications within 30 days.
- Engagement of Drug and Alcohol clients in employment activities within 90 days.

- Lengths of stay in emergency housing have been reduced.
- Assignment in Managed Care Programs within 30 days.

Undertook initiatives to assist special populations to secure employment. A case management approach for TANF cases that have been on assistance for more than five years has resulted in 200 families securing employment and/or coming off Temporary Assistance.

### **Goals 2004**

- Expand employment initiatives to assist both applicants and recipients secure employment.
  - \* Co-location of community employment programs at 691 St. Paul Street.
  - \* Targeted employment programs for families receiving TANF for five years, substance abuse program participants, and transitional housing residents.
  - \* Monthly Job Fairs for employable clients.
  - \* Expansion of front-end employment activities.
- Improved access to community programs for difficult to serve clients through development of a client-specific need assessment; approval of entry into contracted programs and coordinated monitoring of outcomes.
- Maximize opportunities to access services and coordinate delivery of services for Public Assistance recipients/applicants with other-County departments. Specifically, Veterans' benefits and health care, mental health case management and housing programs, Youth Bureau employment programs and shared Intake with Adult/Older Adult Care Path.

### **In the area of Child and Family Services:**

New CPS Investigation Team: An additional Child Protective Services investigation team consisting of 8 caseworkers, a senior caseworker, and a casework supervisor was added in 2003. The Department will receive an estimated 6,000 CPS reports this year, an increase of nearly 14% since 1999. These new staff will help to insure everything necessary is done to investigate allegations of child abuse or neglect and that a service plan is developed for families that need it.

Do Right by Kids: This year Do Right by Kids—our child abuse prevention program—has focused on developing new training for professionals (mental health, law enforcement, child care, education, health) who are required to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. Five groups of trainers have gone through the process and committed to delivering the training to their constituencies. The Do Right by Kids website, [www.dorightbykids.org](http://www.dorightbykids.org), is up and running and will provide information to both mandated reporters and the general public.

Youth and Family Partnership: The Youth and Family Partnership provides intensive, home based services for children who, without the service, would need immediate placement in a residential treatment center. The team, which develops an individualized

plan for each child consists of social workers, probation officers, and mental health professionals. This year the Youth and Family partnership will double in size (to 50 youth and their families) and we are on track to achieve \$1.8 million in foster care savings this year while improving services to families and children.

With our increasing senior citizen population, an **Adult/Older Adult Services** focus expanded in 2003, and will continue to enhance services in 2004 by:

Adding Adult Protective Services to the Provider Resource Network, further adding to the effort to collaborate with community agencies.

Adult Protective will work closely with Office for the Aging (OFA), protocols have been developed giving Adult Protective priority to OFA contracted services.

Revamping the Chronic Care Medicaid team creating an intake and maintenance group, to improve the application processing time and reduce the number of overdue re-certifications.

**A new division resulting from the reorganization of Human Services**: was the establishment of a Special Programs area that is specifically devoted to quality improvement and identification/implementation of cost saving initiatives for the entire department.

A new emphasis by the Special Programs Division to have the Special Investigations Unit focus on fraud is realizing success and increasing Medicaid applicant/recipient denials and closings.

The Special Programs are also conducting health and safety home visits on all informal daycare providers to ensure that children are being served under required guidelines. This project has continued to result in an average closing of 35% of providers visited. This targeted effort is ensuring that limited Child Care Block Grant funds are used appropriately.

**The Monroe County Office of Mental Health** gained a new director in 2003, Dr. Kathleen Plum. This department has been recognized as a leader and innovator in the development of high-quality, cost-effective programs and services, not only within Monroe County but on a multi-county and statewide basis as well.

During the 2003-2004 State Fiscal Year, it is anticipated that both the NYS Office of Mental Health and the NYS Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services will again seek the assistance of Monroe County in expanding the array of special projects and services that will be of benefit to service recipients and families within Monroe County and across the State. All of these projects will be funded with 100% State and Federal funds and the direct impact on the Monroe County Year 2004 Budget will be cost neutral.

On a regional level, the Monroe County Office of Mental Health continues to play a key role in the Western New York Care Coordination Project. This project, involving Monroe and five other western New York counties, is now in the implementation phase, providing individualized, flexible and state-of-the-art rehabilitation and evidence based practices.

A new project slated for implementation in 2004 is a collaborative initiative within the Department of Human and Health Services. Three Benefits Facilitators will be employed to assist individuals with mental illness who are eligible and appropriate for SSI/SSD to receive these benefits, with anticipated savings in county “safety net” assistance dollars.

Another special project is the redeployment of a part-time Parent Advocate through the Coordinated Children’s Services System to assist families having children involved with the county Probation Department. It is anticipated that families receiving advocacy assistance will be better prepared for the challenges presented by their child and the demands of multiple agency involvement, and have a greater receptivity to mental health interventions that will ultimately enhance family functioning.

And lastly, the MCOMH will continue to intensively collaborate with the Public Safety sector to insure that individuals with emotional disturbances receive appropriate intervention from both law enforcement and mental health providers. Directing individuals to the right resource upon first contact not only benefits the individual receiving the intervention, but also benefits the County by utilizing limited resources in the most efficient manner.

**The Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau** will continue to maintain an active coordination, networking, technical assistance and training role with the Community Asset Partner Network. Monroe County communities continue to be committed to growing and sustaining their asset initiatives and the Youth Bureau has been successful to-date in locating funding and resource supports to assist the Asset Initiative.

As in past years, The Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau has been recognized on a statewide basis as a leader within the Youth Bureau arena, for its expertise in quality youth development supports and opportunities. The Youth Bureau, through invitation, is participating on the NYS Partners For Children Team, a consortium of New York State departments that are working to infuse youth development policy, language, standards and expectations throughout all state departments involved with youth. The Youth Bureau has also been recognized for its Best Practices work to improve skills and competencies in work with youth and the introduction of evidence-based/research-based program models. As a division of the newly formed Department of Human and Health Services, initial conversations have been held as to how the Best Practices Project might assist the staff and vendors of the Child and Family Care Path to more effectively work with youth.

The Youth Bureau is currently involved in a private/public/educational partnership to implement a Youth Development Organizational Capacity Building pilot. NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) has noted publicly that the Youth Bureau’s work in this area is exemplary and has invited Monroe County to share our knowledge as the pilot progresses.

The Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau continues to have a co-chair role in the Youth Services Quality Council of Rochester and Monroe County. The council’s focus is aligned with the work of the County Youth Bureau and is piloting two study teams in effective organizational practice with youth as well as receiving a community-wide impact grant from the Ad Council of Rochester for services support to develop a Positive Youth Development Media Campaign.

**The Office for the Aging** will begin implementation of the Senior Action Plan (SAP) recommendations. The Senior Action Plan examines the service needs of older adults and sets a joint community framework for the delivery of those services over the next decade.

The Office for the Aging is developing a presentation entitled "Project 2015" which addresses the rapid growth of the senior population within the next decade, and our plans to serve the growing numbers of seniors. The power point presentation we are developing will be shown to community leaders, service providers and others.

The Office for the Aging will continue to improve coordination with Adult Protective Services through co-location, and through utilization of the Provider Resource Network.